

# China's 'innovation boom' brings more opportunities

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THE colourful Hashtag Durban display continues to draw the attention of tourists and children at the Durban beachfront. People take turns having their picture taken beside it. | TUMI PAKKIES Independent Newspapers

## China achieves fruitful results in high-quality development during 14th Five-Year Plan period

By Ren Zhongping (People's Daily) 08:22, October 22, 2025

The 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) has started its fourth plenary session in Beijing on Oct. 20. The four-day meeting aims at studying the proposals for formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030) for national economic and social development, making the top-level design and strategic blueprint for China's development in the coming five years.

Formulating and implementing five-year plans in a science-based way is an important approach for the CPC in governance, and serves as a vital key to understanding Chinese modernization. Academic observers globally recognize these plans as exemplary models of long-term strategic governance.

Throughout the ongoing 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025), China has advanced economic and social development through technological innovation while accelerating its transition toward sustainable development. This integrated approach has yielded enhanced economic quality alongside measurable environmental gains.

China's annual production of new energy vehicles surpassed 13 million units, while its shipbuilding industry achieved milestone capabilities in constructing large LNG carriers, aircraft carriers and luxury cruise ships - collectively

regarded as the "three crown jewels" of advanced vessel manufacturing. Concurrently, China established 6,340 nationally certified green factories and now operates the world's largest renewable energy infrastructure and clean technology supply chain, positioning it among global leaders in reducing energy intensity.

According to the recently released Global Innovation Index 2025, China entered the world's top ten innovators for the first time. With the world's largest pool of R&D personnel and scientific talent, the nation has strategically prioritized innovation in its modernization agenda, evolving from the "world's factory" to a global innovation hub.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period, per capita disposable income in formerly impoverished rural counties grew at an average annual rate of 7.8% (real terms) - surpassing the national rural average. This progress narrowed the urban-rural income gap from 2.56:1 (2020) to 2.34:1 (2024), while final consumption expenditure contributed approximately 60% annually to economic growth.

China's domestic market, powered by over 1.4 billion people including more than 400 million middle-income consumers, demonstrates significant scale advantages and

growth potential through its diverse, multi-tiered demand structure.

The 2025 Edelman Trust Barometer, released in March this year, showed that Chinese citizens' trust in their government remains the highest in the world, while their overall optimism about the future also ranks first globally.

In July, the fifth volume of "Xi Jinping: The Governance of China" was published. International observers believe that China's governance model is more capable of delivering stability, prosperity, and freedom for its people. Since the new era began, China's institutional framework has become more complete, science-based and effective, and institutional strengths have been better transformed into governance efficiency.

In May, the Private Sector Promotion Law came into effect, marking the first time that the principle of "unswervingly consolidating and developing the public sector and unswervingly encouraging, supporting and guiding the development of the non-public sector" has been written into law, and the first time the legal status of the private economy has been explicitly defined. Foreign media described this as a "milestone."

China continues strengthening its market foundations through rule of law, exemplified by the Foreign Investment Law boosting investor confidence and fair competition regulations enforcing institutional constraints. These measures advance a unified national market, creating a rule-



Rice is harvested in Qingxi village, Qiandaohu township, Chun'an county, Hangzhou, east China's Zhejiang province, Oct. 19, 2025. (Photo/Yang Bo)

of-law environment that attracts global resources - a crucial element in Chinese modernization.

During the drafting of the 15th Five-Year Plan, online public consultations garnered over 3.11 million submissions, illustrating China's whole-process people's democracy in practice. By improving democratic institutions and integrating top-level design with public participation, China aims to build consensus for advancing modernization goals.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period, China maintained high-level openness despite global headwinds. As of July this year, China's actual use of foreign investment during the



Employees at the wiring harness workshop of a private electronic enterprise in the Huayingshan Economic Development Zone of Huaying, southwest China's Sichuan province, perform harness crimping on an intelligent production line, April 18, 2025. (Photo/Qu Haiyang)

period reached \$714.87 billion, with 235,000 new foreign-invested enterprises established, an increase of 32,000 from the 13th Five-Year Plan period.

High-quality Belt and Road cooperation has become the world's broadest and largest platform for international cooperation. At the Tianjin summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the Global Governance Initiative, calling on all countries to work together to build a more just and



A robotic dog is exhibited at the 138th edition of the China Import and Export Fair held in Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong province, Oct. 17, 2025. The first phase of the fair is joined by around 12,000 enterprises. (Photo/Huang Taiming)

equitable global governance system. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that the future of humanity largely depends on China.

Having transformed from a peripheral player to a central force in global development, Chinese modernization offers a distinct pathway to socialist advancement and national rejuvenation. This model presents a new paradigm for human progress and civilization.

## Bridges that connect: a window into China's development

By Long Guoyi (People's Daily) 11:06, October 27, 2025

From towering mountains to boundless seas, bridges now span across China's vast land, transforming once-isolated regions into seamlessly connected landscapes. In recent months, a string of new bridges have come into service, drawing wide public attention.

In southwest China's Guizhou province, the Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge, hailed as the world's tallest and longest-span bridge, has become a new tourist attraction following its inauguration.

In Badong county, central China's Hubei province, the newly completed Yesanguan Bridge has shortened the travel distance between Yesanguan township and the Yesanguan railway station by approximately 10 kilometers.

In Jilin city, northeast China's Jilin province, the Hongqi Bridge spans the Songhua River, easing rush-hour congestion and improving urban mobility.

Bridge by bridge, these monumental structures now stretch across rivers, lakes, seas, and valleys, linking mountain ranges and communities. Each serves not only as critical infrastructure but also as a powerful symbol of China's economic and social progress.

These record-breaking projects underscore China's emphasis on self-reliance and technological innovation.



The Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge, the world's tallest bridge, in southwest China's Guizhou province opens to traffic, Sept. 28, 2025. (Photo/Li Yunfeng)

The Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link in the southern province of Guangdong, with a clearance of 91 meters above sea level, is now the world's highest sea bridge. The Aizhai Bridge in central China's Hunan province has set multiple world records, while the Tian'e Longtan Bridge in Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region is the world's first steel-reinforced concrete arch bridge exceeding 600 meters in span.

Such engineering milestones have filled key technical gaps, established China's own engineering standards, and strengthened a fully independent industrial chain. At the core of these achievements is a strategy-driven commitment to original scientific research and breakthrough innovation in critical technologies.

China's bridge boom also reflects the vibrancy of its vast domestic market. Each new bridge resolves logistical bottlenecks and enhances regional connectivity. Since its opening, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge has repeatedly broken traffic records and become a crucial artery of regional integration in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. The total import and export value through

Zhuhai port had exceeded 1 trillion yuan (\$140.4 billion).

The Changtai (Changzhou-Taizhou) Yangtze River Bridge in Jiangsu province has reduced travel time between Changzhou and Taizhou from 80 minutes to just 20, sharply increasing regional mobility. Within a month of its opening, cargo throughput at Changzhou's Lu'an Zhou Yangtze terminal recorded double-digit growth.

By bringing regions closer together, these projects accelerate economic activity and reinforce efforts to create a unified national market.

Beyond economics, China's bridges reflect a deep commitment to inclusive development. In remote areas, bridges link urban and rural communities, embodying the principle that "no one should be left behind on the road to socialism."

Over a decade ago, an iconic image captured two sisters crossing the roaring Nuijiang River in Nuijiang Lisu autonomous prefecture, southwest China's Yunnan province, via a ropeway to reach school. That scene epitomized the challenges faced by remote communities. Today, with initiatives like "ropeways-to-bridges," such perilous crossings have been replaced. The completion of the Qiaoma Bridge transformed local access, enabling communities to pursue new development opportunities.

"We're living a life we never dared to dream of," the sisters said. Each bridge serves as a passage to progress, transforming local landscapes, facilitating trade, and integrating remote communities into the national modernization process.

Across the country, many bridges are under construction. As more of them open to traffic, they will continue to tell new stories of innovation, connection, and shared development.

## Why China has become a 'forward-looking nation'

By He Yin (People's Daily) 09:01, November 03, 2025

On Oct. 23, the fourth plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) concluded successfully. The international community has closely monitored the session, recognizing the growing global significance of China's five-year planning framework.

Worldwide confidence remains high that China will continue to serve as both a stabilizing anchor and a growth engine for the global economy. Many anticipate new opportunities brought by Chinese modernization.

The CPC's practice of scientifically formulating and implementing five-year plans represents a cornerstone of its governance approach. These plans offer critical insight into China's modernization path for the international community.

"China is a country that always plans for the long term. It truly is a forward-looking nation," remarked former Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti, capturing the widespread admiration for China's governance wisdom, which combines medium-term planning with century-long aspirations.

China's transformative development - a historic achievement reshaping human progress - stems significantly from its disciplined execution of five-year plans. These frameworks leverage the strengths of China's socialist system, enabling coordinated national implementation and policy continuity under a unified blueprint.

Since the launch of the first Five-Year Plan in 1953, China has transformed from an impoverished agrarian country into the world's largest manufacturing hub and the second-largest economy. As the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025) concludes this year, this trajectory

exemplifies how sequential five-year plan - combining long-term vision with practical implementation - have systematically advanced China's modernization. Globally, these plans are recognized as valuable frameworks for nations studying China's development model.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period, China navigated volatile international conditions and domestic reforms while mitigating major risks. It converted high-quality development into stabilizing force against global uncertainty.

China's economy is expected to grow 35 trillion yuan (\$4.93 trillion) in total during the five years, with per capita GDP exceeding \$13,000 for two consecutive years, placing the country among upper-middle-income countries. China has remained the world's top manufacturing nation for 15 straight years and contributed around 30 percent of global economic growth annually.

Amid today's crossroads of global instability, China sustains focus on its developmental priorities. By aligning national rejuvenation goals with emerging global dynamics, it provides growing certainty through consistent governance.

The Recommendations of the Central Committee of the CPC for Formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development, adopted at the fourth plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the CPC, lays out the top-level design and strategic blueprint for the next five years. It marks another comprehensive mobilization and deployment to build on the momentum and carry forward the cause of Chinese modernization. The document combines strategic foresight with a pragmatic, problem-oriented approach,



Workers fulfill overseas orders in a smart workshop of a tire manufacturer in Suqian, east China's Jiangsu province. (Photo/Xu Jianghai)

providing clear direction for China's future development and reinforcing global confidence in China's prospects.

Observers worldwide called the plenary session a meeting that will shape global markets over the next five years, saying such institutional arrangements enable China to advance national development efficiently and achieve long-term goals. They believe China is poised to create more development opportunities and offer valuable solutions for the world.

These views reflect a shared understanding that China, committed to sharing opportunities and pursuing common development with all countries, is increasingly seen as an "oasis of certainty" in a turbulent world, continuing to contribute to global stability, cooperation, and progress.

Socialist modernization can only be realized through a historical process of gradual and ongoing development. The period covered by the 15th Five-Year Plan will be critical in this process as China works to reinforce the foundations and push ahead on all fronts toward basically realizing socialist modernization.

Through strategic resolve and historical initiative, China aims to advance national rejuvenation while creating broader avenues for global peace and win-win cooperation.



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THE MORE SAND THAT HAS ESCAPED FROM THE HOURGLASS OF OUR LIFE, THE CLEARER WE SHOULD SEE THROUGH IT. | **JEAN PAUL**